THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) The Liquidated Damage (LD) charges as per provisions of the licence agreement, have been recovered from them, for delay in fulfilment of the committed performance obligations in this respect. Further, they have also been asked to complete the unfulfilled committed roll out obligations by December, 2002 for which submission of additional Performance Bank Guarantees and Deed of Guarantees have been demanded.

Multi Purpose Counter Machines

2611. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the basic objectives of installation of Multi Purpose Counter Machines (MPCM) at post offices, to provide single window service to customers in order to reduce waiting time and make counter service error-fee and more productive, could not be achieved;

(b) whether only 2789 MPCM out of 6257 produced so far, were working till March, 2000;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) what steps are being taken to utilise these machines in toto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR) : (a) No, Sir. The Department of Posts has achieved its objectives of providing single window service to customers with the installation of Multi Purpose Counter Machines (MPCMs).

(b) No, Sir, As on March 2000, a total of 2590 MPCMs had been installed in the country and these are in operation although some machines may be down at times for maintenance which is but normal with any machine.

(c) Does not arise in view of (b) above.

(d) Machines are put to optimal use. The performance average during March 2000 was 3533 transactions per month as against the target of 3000 transactions per machine. Annual Maintenance Contract is available for the machines to ensure timely repairs.